

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 501
By Dixon

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the effects of environmental factors on the emotional and intellectual growth of infants in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, infants have the cognitive ability to pick out what is important in the environment and to establish neural links to adapt to those surroundings in which they grow up; and

WHEREAS, brain research has revealed that the first three years of a child's life are more important for emotional and intellectual growth than previously thought; and

WHEREAS, however, many outside influences that infants experience do not contribute to, and in fact may hinder, the development of a useful neurological architecture; and

WHEREAS, new knowledge about the vulnerability of the developing brain to environmental factors suggests that early exposure to nicotine, alcohol and drugs may have more harmful and long-lasting effects on young children than was previously suspected; and

WHEREAS, evidence amassed by neuroscientists and child development experts over the last decade point to the wisdom and efficacy of prevention and early intervention in dealing with such environmental factors; and

WHEREAS, the efficacy of early intervention has been demonstrated and replicated in diverse communities across the nation, as evidenced by the fact that children from families with

000000000

00000000

010683

01068347

less formal education appear to derive the greatest cognitive benefits from intervention programs; and

WHEREAS, early care intervention has a decisive, long-lasting impact on how people develop, their ability to learn and their capacity to regulate their own emotions; and

WHEREAS, although the human brain has a remarkable capacity for change, timing is crucial, because there are times when negative experiences or the absence of appropriate stimulation are more likely to have serious and sustained effects; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon the members of this legislative body to ensure the well-being and continued development of this state's most treasured natural resource, our children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study the effects of environmental factors on the emotional and intellectual growth of infants in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall consist of eight (8) members of the House of Representatives, two (2) of whom shall be members of the House Education Committee, two (2) of whom shall be members of the House Health and Human Resources Committee, two (2) of whom shall be members of the House Committee on Children and Family Affairs, two (2) of whom shall be members of the House Finance Ways and Means Committee, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and eight (8) members of the Senate, three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate Education Committee, three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate General Welfare Health and Human Resources Committee, and two (2) of whom shall be members of the Senate Finance Ways and Means Committee, to be appointed by the Speaker of the Senate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly; and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall timely report its findings, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the One Hundred First General Assembly no later than February 1, 1999, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.